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## SEMANTIC CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES IN THE MUSA AHMADOV'S CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY

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### *Abstract*

The paper is devoted to the problem of the concept of personality reflected in the work of Chechen writer Musa Ahmadov. The national literary studies have long noted the leading role of the writer in modern Chechen literature highlighted through the creation of a unique genre system, and many research papers were written about him thus studying the diversity of his prose. The paper emphasizes the multidimensional nature of the writer's prose and analyzes individual concepts and symbols defining the essence of his concept of personality. The practical material of the paper is built on two stories – (*Plea, Father's Garden*) written at different periods: the first – on the eve of tragic military events that took place on the territory of Chechnya in the 1994-2000s, the second – after the end of these events. One of the key aspects of the characteristic of stories is their autobiographical nature. The paper also notes the main motives of Musa Ahmadov's stories. The major of them is the motive of childhood – a bright and serene time in the life of heroes contrasting with dark and disturbing time in their adult life. Building the artistic space of works against the background of alarming reality, the writer creates an image of a representative of modern Chechen intellectuals, the fundamental features of whose character get mature in the traditional national context of ideas of good and justice having direct intersection with universal norms and rules of solving problems of good and evil.

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**Keywords:** Concept, symbol, essayistic, autobiography, personality, story.



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## 1. Introduction

The well-known context of studying the peculiarities of the development of modern national literature includes a very large and at the same time very simple concept that the “national literature represents a set of works of fiction reflecting the self-awareness of individual people” (Mashakova, 2017, p. 365). The relevance of the problem of the formation of the concept of personality in Chechen literature is obvious and undeniable in the works of individual writers, mainly from the point of view of the uniqueness of the development of modern Chechen literature.

The relevance of the problem, which the authors consider necessary and significant, does not have a comprehensive study in North Caucasus (Chechen) literature. The presented material is aimed at identifying various aspects that are fundamental and meaningful in the process of forming the concept of artistic personality in the works of modern Chechen writers.

Being typological in its key manifestations, the problem of the concept of personality in modern Chechen literature finds its solution in the works of the Chechen writer Musa Ahmadov reflecting continuous evolution of the idea of person and personality, problems of the history of ethnos, its modern state, national self-awareness, national self-identification.

## 2. Problem Statement

The formation of meaning concepts and categories in the context of personality of the Chechen writer Ahmadov (2010) is unique primarily from the point of view of the fact that the personality of each character in Musa Ahmadov’s prose is created for artistic and psychological analysis, it is created not statically, not at once, but is depicted comprehensively, undergoing one or another, quite often extremely tough and complex evolution.

As a rule, the history of any individual “fits” into the context of historical time, but is not stated in a progressive, consistent, step-by-step manner. On the contrary, temporary plans constantly “interrupt” each other, the action according to the laws of psychological and artistic chronotope is first accelerated, runs ahead of time, and then stops.

Thus, for example, in our opinion the memories of heroes about their past, various forms of retrospection quite consciously represented in the texts of Ahmadov (2010) are most often confused, contradictory, tense, as it happens in human memory, consciousness and subconscious full of a vast and by no means smooth and, often, far from being “portable” “database” of the life history and personality of the hero and his loved ones. Moreover, the problem of personality is directly linked to the history of the people, their traditions, to such important categories for the development of any ethnic group as “national consciousness and self-consciousness”, “national idea”.

## 3. Research Questions

The subject of study and analysis in the paper were the stories of Musa Ahmadov – *Plea* and *Father’s Garden*, united by a common idea of creating a concept of personality, the key figure in which becomes the representative of modern Chechen intelligentsia: in the first story – a librarian, in the second – a writer himself (Ahmadov, 2010). The meaning categories and concepts within the writer’s personality

are those that are included in the universal format of ideas of truth and justice, good and evil, nobility and honor, sanctity of marriage and family.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the problem of the concept of artistic personality, which is new in literature, especially in the works of individual Chechen (in general North Caucasus) writers. The creation of scientific, theoretical and applied material capable of expanding the understanding of patterns forming the concept of personality in Chechen literature is also recognized as the purpose of the study.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The paper utilizes comparative-historical and structural-semantic methods, which provided for a comprehensive study of the internal structure of Ahmadov's (2010) prose, various aspects of the concept of personality in his work. The above methods also made it possible to study the system of images and characters created by the writer in his works, the uniqueness and specificity of artistic and visual means, key categories and concepts, which the author uses to create a unique concept of artistic personality.

#### **6. Findings**

There is a well-established opinion among the scientists in modern North Caucasian literature that "the transfer of socially significant conflicts to the inner world of complex and ambiguous characters leads to mobile and synthesized types of a prose" (Panesh et al., 2017, p. 158). Modern Chechen writer Musa Ahmadov is among those authors who often resort to synthesized genres in their work expressing the essence of tough historical time and the problem of ambiguous character of the hero.

The Plea was written by the author in 1993 during the tragic events in the territory of modern Chechnya. The writer, being a contemporary, a witness and a reluctant participant of many tragic events for the entire ethnic group, the consequences of which are always a heavy burden and leave some mark on consciousness and emotions of a real citizen artist, managed to create in his story a picture of disquieting scent of trouble. As is known, the main function of literature is to reveal the tragic shocks of the world and society through the personality and fate of a person, his emotional sphere.

In the Plea the direct action covers only a few hours of disturbing thunderstorm night in a dark rural house without electricity, where casually a young hero was left alone with a one-and-a-half-year-old child on his hands. The history of his life and personality, in many ways typical for his ethnos, but also highly individual both for the whole ethnos, and for his generation, is presented in the format of novella – memories of the main hero.

In the process and format of the inner illogical monologue of the hero the reader learns the main stages of his life and many not quite ordinary qualities of his personality connected with the fact that this guy from the Chechen village, which was interested in reading since his childhood, chooses a career of a librarian not typical for his national gender tradition. The author of the story once again attempts to create the image of the representative of the national intelligentsia, and this is related, first of all, to the fact that

despite the difficulties and adversity of the Soviet history such a new socio-professional layer of the national society as the intelligentsia was able to reach quite sufficient level.

In the images of intelligentsia created in modern Chechen literature, in the outline of their personality there are still many conditions and various stereotypes, but it is possible to note (to different degrees) the inherent works of this type of autobiography and the general spiritual and intellectual beginning. Although in such works the Chechen authors in the process of depicting such a personality, whose problems are extremely close to them, are not yet quite ready to reflect the full depth and complexity of the inner world, the peculiarities of the personality of an intellectual person, his creative work.

In Musa Ahmadov's *Plea* there is almost no direct fixation of dramatic facts of the current, modern history, the author mentions them hastily and airily, but at the same time the feeling of anxiety, fear, tragic inexplicability and inescapability of what is happening fills this work, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly saturates its entire tone. Some specific grim events of the modern history are mentioned in the story extremely densely, through hints.

The *Plea* begins with the indication of a specific time of its action: a rainy night, the hero goes into his thoughts listening to heavy rain. The sound of the rain makes the hero remember his childhood when "it was raining slowly and shortly, and after the rain the sun was always smiling" (Ahmadov, 2010, p.36). The hero is captured by the memory of his childhood, the illusion that in the initial period of being everything was different, which turns out to be in many ways close to the lyrical world view of Musa Ahmadov.

For Musa Ahmadov's hero there is a very sharp contrast, even antagonism between his childhood light and serene perception of the world and today's state of anxiety and internal tension. The child feeling of light, tranquility, pacification, vivifying force is in fact sharply resisted by apocalyptic perception by the present hero of this natural phenomenon, consequences of such violence of nature during heavy rain are perceived as the disastrous and destructive phenomena.

The writer strongly transmits the atmosphere of anxiety and tension in the soul of the main hero through light strokes, with a large share of non-agreement, presentation, statement of certain considerations as if "between the lines of text" giving the impression that the externally common "video sequence" of events is fixed by some "hidden camera".

The direct, immediate time of action of the *Plea* lasts for a short time, only about an hour between midnight and pre-dawn. But the retrospective time, the events of which are carried out in the consciousness and emotional inner world of the hero, covers in the most acute and dramatic fragments almost all his life, involving the details of his life, the fate of others close to him. The motive of the rampant natural element also sounds an unsolicited refrain throughout the narrative.

A Chechen man, originally a courageous warrior, is shown in the story in a completely different, not typical manner in accordance with ethnic gender stereotypes of initial function, role, not intended for foreign eyes, and, as a result, revealing the very depths of the soul of this person, exactly its universal human component. The man with the crying child on hands holding him tight thus protecting and preserving him with his force of responsibility, warmth and love becomes the new phenomenon for modern Chechen literature.

The common motive of the absence of such domestic little things as matches grows to deep symbolic generalizations related to the loss of light, heat, hearth, with the violation of the usual way and rhythm of life. The author psychologically reliably transmits the state of the character, in the consciousness of whom while chasing around the house with his son on his hands, confusing, contradictory memories of the past pass like a vortex.

The composition of this work is characterized by a ring structure: the events presented at the beginning of the story as an exposition and introduction in the middle part of the text are “interrupted” by several detailed episodes, in fact, by “insert” novella, deepening, complicating and sharpening the idea of the story in order to bring it to an outcome in the end returning to the place and time of action, which is the beginning of the text.

At the same time, the ring idea, the design of the plot of the story is not limited to returning the action at the end of the text to the space of its beginning. This “ring” principle, its intent in the story seems much deeper and more complex. At the beginning in the consciousness and subconscious of today’s hero there is a bright memory and a positive sense of harmony of the individual in a long-gone childhood. At the ending the hero, who passed through the years of psychological injuries, losses and adversity, living with a feeling of instability and anxiety, suddenly for himself appeals with sincere and grateful prayer to the Divine Father.

In the meaningful structure of this work there are about seven successive novelistic fragments – episodes, most of which have the nature of retroreflection demonstrating the history of not so long, but very dramatic life and personality of the main character. Thus, the first memory transfers the memory and consciousness of the hero of the Plea to “one of the wet dim evenings of the last autumn month, when the gardens are filled with the aroma of ripe quince” (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 75).

The impressionistic picture created by the author, which includes a range of sensory, tangible, olfactory, and then sound images-impressions, as if re-felt by the hero of the story of Musa Ahmadov, also affects his subconscious. The unconscious property, the state of personality of the hero, excited by his insomnia that again brings to life the heavy memories bordering on hopelessness, again owns him painfully and grievously. The hero of the story unsuccessfully seeks his missing brother. The author of the story notes that the sign of a vague time was the disappearance of people and the brother of the hero is not the only one who is wanted by his relatives.

Ahmadov (2010) deeply thinks about the kind of tragic “world duality”, where the dominant for the personality of Amaga – the main character of the – - was both a cruel reality, and the world of books and his memories – dreams (the phenomenon of “world duality”, the conflict of “dream” and reality).

In chronological terms, in the plan of artistic chronotope the episode of the meeting of the hero with his future wife turns out to be closer to the real time of action. This episode is characterized by realism, its tone – by prosaic and routine nature, lack of emotional, to some extent lyrico-romantic beginning, which is not alien to the author’s vision and individual manner of Ahmadov (2010), including his artistic interpretation of the concept of personality. A writer with not quite deserved hero irony notices that she was one of those who is tired of waiting for the realization of her dream and is given on bail.

On the other hand, by a few exact details the author tries to show that the personality of Amaga, honest, conscious, deeply sensitive, but timid, not quite ready for independent actions and decisions, is

not sufficiently able to resist the world of entrepreneurial and unscrupulous people. His future wife was from the circle of such people.

The author regrets that Amaga, as a representative of the intelligentsia, because of his human personal insecurity, is dependent on the will and intentions of the members of the more active segment of the society, although generally speaking he is categorically unwilling and unable to adopt and accept their way of thought and way of life. At the same time, the prosaic touches upon the eternal theme of tragic loneliness of a person thinking differently from the whole world around him.

The next story and semantic episode of the Plea turns out to be a documentary, information-journalistic and information-analytical direction, a tone turned not so much to the artistic concept of personality at the turning points of history, but to the artistic concept of ethnos and society.

The writer makes a very accurate psychological diagnosis of the social and political situation in the republic of the early 1990s highlighting that at the heart of the high political rhetoric during this period is the struggle for material benefits. It is obvious that the deformation of individual and mass consciousness recorded by the author during difficult periods of history, care and concern him, he sees perceives them as factors of deformation of personality.

Returning to the action of the present moment, on the dark rainy night with which the story begins, the author presents a hero driven to the extremes of his anxiety for the child and for his own destiny in this dark and hostile world. Experiencing the burden of his losses and suffering with a new acuity, Amaga suddenly instinctively appeals to the Divine Father. The words of prayer heard as a child from his mother are scarcely appearing from the depths of his memory. "He ... read this sacred suru from the Quran, and the weeping of the boy, gradually fading, became quiet. He looked at his son in surprise. The child looked out of the window, and it was lit with strange light" (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 35).

The culmination of the story is a prayer, which in this context is of a grateful character, not a Plea, which could be perceived as a request, a plea. The author of the story demonstrates his assurance that in the world there are firm values helping a person to survive, concentrate the efforts, patience, will in order to remain that personality, a person able to resist to the evil forces.

A big miracle at the end of the story is an unexpected knock on the night door, because of which in deaf darkness appears the mother of a child, the life with which, as it seemed to the hero, is already finished. In this scene of the story the author expresses the idea that under the influence of a terrible night power, in the depth of the personality of a young woman awakens not quite lost sprouts of humanity and love towards their loved ones and relatives. Recognizing the "sanctity of marriage and the piety that reject the world of cruelty" (McGrath, 2012, para. 08), Ahmadov (2010) gives his heroes the right to find peace and well-being in the family, gives a chance for a small child to grow up happy despite the disturbing circumstances surrounding their reality. In the author's concept of personality there is a key thought: only good is able to compete with evil and defeat it, and faith in the Divine Father, a prayer can become a miraculous force strengthening the spirit and will of a person in his desire for truth and justice.

## **7. Conclusion**

Leo Tolstoy that was considered a world-class thinker linked the idea of historical progress to the solution of the question of the purpose of a person and the meaning of his life, the answer to which was to

be given by “true religion” (Spirkin, 2017). Tolstoy (2015) believed that “the shortest expression of the meaning of life is this: the world is moving, improving; the task of a person is to participate in this movement by obedience and facilitation” (p. 16).

In the structure of the narrative of the Plea, the Chechen writer Musa Ahmadov demonstrates the evolution of the character’s personality. Against the background of the grim social and political turmoil, the writer creates a line of fate for an individual who tries to resist the difficult circumstances of life, to prevent forces alien to his internal world from destroying conceptually significant principles of his personality.

Curiously, the key words of the text of the story, sounding a refrain, deeply penetrating into the soul and sometimes completely absorbing, subjugating the personality of the character, as longing, fear, anxiety, which, like profanity, linguists sometimes qualify as “anti-prayer”, here are rightly replaced and refuted by the words and the spirit of the prayer itself. Thus, the ending of the Plea, like all its pathos, have a deep optimistic nature, connected, first of all, with the faith in the Divine Father, by virtue of good, in the creative power of the human personality.

In 2004, Musa Ahmadov creates a text with the symbolic name The Father’s Garden, which notes conceptually significant categories and concepts involved in the process of forming the concept of the writer’s personality. In the genre aspect, Musa Ahmadov’s story has all the features of an essayistic (Ahmadov, 2010), autobiographical prose. Essayistics is known to be characterized by lyrical autobiography, the presence of an open author’s position and the direct expression of author’s consciousness.

However, in the story of Musa Ahmadov, the image of the father’s garden is numerous, multidimensional, symbolizes the love for the small homeland, for the father’s house, expresses the cherished feelings of the author. In the context of the artistic space of the story, the image of the garden becomes a symbol of peace, life, fertility and good, reinforced by the definition of “father”, a concept that contains many meanings, starting with such single words as stepfather, paternal, etc.

The Russian philosopher Solovyev (1988) recognized a person as “the center of the universal consciousness of nature” (p. 73), believed that the person is called to modify nature before its spirituality, perfect integration. The Father’s Garden is from the context of the deep thinking of the Chechen writer about the unity of nature and a person.

At the same time, the philosophical metaphor of the garden created by Ahmadov encourages the reader to turn to such intertexts, to such allusions as ... “it is necessary to cultivate your garden” (Voltaire, 1985, p. 63). The meaning of this many-valued metaphor belonging to Voltaire lies in the idea of the eternity and immutability of the kind of activity to which every full-fledged person to whom his soul is keen on specifically, in particular such indefinitely replicating the life of a good cause connected with natural cycling as garden cultivation.

Besides, the image of the garden is extremely deep and multifaceted and thus it combines the features of two seemingly distant, even antagonistic categories, such as nature and culture, civilization. On the one hand, the garden as a world of living plants is part of nature, on the other, the garden is a product of human activity. And in the process of forming the concept of the personality of Musa Ahmadov, the image of the garden finds a symbol of the unity of nature and a man.

The time of writing the story – 2004 – is significant, as it is connected with the revival of the Chechen people after their physical, moral-psychological and spiritual-moral losses in two military campaigns. In this regard, the “garden” in the writer’s text becomes an eternal, timeless category full of deep meaning.

Musa Ahmadov’s philosophical novella *The Father’s Garden* begins with the author’s memories of his childhood dominated by impressions, images and motives associated with the spring period of the year cycle. The lyrical beginning is intertwined with a reliably accurate image of that natural environment, the natural landscape, already combined with the man-made landscape that surrounded the native village of the author.

The author simultaneously makes an excursion to the somewhat earlier history of his native places, once again emphasizing the difficult “relationship” of natural and civilizational, man-made factors: “Once there were dreary forests everywhere, and people settled, cutting down trees and burning the remaining pines. Now people fought the remnants of those forests that were cut down once: they persistently did not want to disappear, re-living every spring” (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 36). The story reveals the theme of the garden and at the same time the dichotomy of nature and a man.

The time of the author’s memories and historical time in the work constantly move and intersect. Musa Ahmadov is externally dispassionate, but with deaf pain notices about the events of the most recent history: “it has been five years since the road to our village disappeared (the bridge over the Argun was destroyed)”. Perhaps not without the equally deeply hidden irony, the author adds: “these five years benefited the vegetation surrounding the village: seedlings grew from the sprouts, seedlings turned into bushes, shrubs became trees ...” (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 38).

The philosophical short story by Musa Akhmadov, addressing the early childhood again, reminds that during this period there was a continuous fight against the trees surrounding the village. It is obvious that the topic of breeding gardens, agriculture in its broadest sense is very close to the writer as to a person saying that, despite everything, people broke gardens in yards as a symbol of stability of life, well-being of a man, his unity with the land of ancestors.

The image of the author’s father draws special attention in the text of the story. The writer details and passionately describes the garden landing technology his father owned. By reviving the old traditions of creating regional varieties of fruit-bearing trees existed in the national agriculture from a long time ago, the writer’s father created his truly unique garden.

Musa Ahmadov reveals that this routine, daily, demanding diligence, patience, pedantism, debilitating labor of his father were actually smothered by his deep knowledge of the world around him, observation, experience, intuition. It was both science and art, and was dictated by love for her native land, everything alive, love for man, for the people for whom he did his good deeds.

Such activities, according to the writer’s deep conviction, are a very significant factor in the formation of personality, all its faces. The author also draws attention to the fact that his father not only experienced himself, but calmly perceived and overcame the mockery of fellow villagers, stereotypes of mass consciousness. Thus, the paternal garden is a significant metaphor in Ahmadov’s (2010) work, symbolizing the idea related to the good role of an individual in the creative activity of the mankind, confirmation of the famous idea that “truth is good, conceivable by human mind, beauty is the same good



and the same truth, physically embodied in a living concrete form” (Dostoevsky, 2015, p. 21). In the story of Musa Ahmadov – the garden is a “living specific form”, by means of which his hero discovers the need to do good and create.

The writer notes with regret that the human, personal factor in every good cause turns out not to be eternal, but transient, requiring continuity. In the text of the work this is stated by the following words: “when the father fell ill and then died, the care of the garden weakened. Then the garden was abandoned, and become overgrown ...” (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 35). Besides, in the context of the writer’s sad reflections, an “unusual form of spiritual autobiography” of the older generation is created, with which he attempts to “exchange spiritual considerations” (Ord, 2018, para. 08) regarding the modern state of the people.

The final pages of the work are devoted to the events of recent national history, the outbreak of war and its consequences. They are imbued with an acute (albeit extremely restrained) sense of the writer’s personal and general losses. Through such a discreet comment, without inflaming the situation with any realistic military episodes and scenes Musa Ahmadov conveys the depth of the national tragedy, a humanitarian catastrophe that has proved detrimental both to every individual and to the whole society.

“A year ago, before the onset of autumn, two men from the village of Zona visited our village crossing the river in shallow waters. The abandoned village was all in the fruit of trees, which were left unattended and disappeared now without any benefit. When they told about it, both had tears...” – tells the writer in one of the episodes (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 64).

The image of the garden in this episode appears in a new form. The garden created, cultivated with all the spiritual generosity and painstaking work, by the will of evil forces – forces of enmity and politics – became tragically unnecessary. The author admits that the news of the death of his father’s garden made him realize the need to visit his native village, but he never went there.

As a historical and psychological parallelism, the author recalls that despite the persuasions of many of those returning from deportation sites his father (in the far 1950s) wanted to live and cultivate a garden where his ancestors lived. Denying himself the desire to follow the example of his father, Musa Ahmadov notes with bitterness: the reason is passivity and apathy, which is covered by his generation. Thinking about the fate of the people, about the burning problems of the spiritual and moral context, about the problem of continuity of generations, traditions, the writer states with pain: “The roads of fathers ... Who follows them today?” (Ahmadov, 2010).

Reflecting on the personality of his father, his place in nature and society, the author acknowledges that there is not much in him that was typical for his father. But still a measure of his personal compliance with his father’s high personal scale, the writer considers this: “sometimes I think I would be able to care for my father’s garden. And the pain for this garden torments me with the beginning of every spring” (Ahmadov, 2010, p. 43).

It is that the soul of the writer is hurt for the offspring of his father, and is a measure of his responsibility to the future, a deep understanding that “everyone should cultivate their garden”, which is what Musa Ahmadov continues to do tirelessly as an individual, a writer and a citizen. The artistic concept of personality grows in his mind to a comprehensive anthropological paradigm converging with the holistic philosophical ontological concept of peace and man.

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